

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MEDIA CONTACTS

#### City of North Charleston

Ryan Johnson

Public Information

843-740-2520

[rjohnson@northcharleston.org](mailto:rjohnson@northcharleston.org)

#### Oak Terrace Preserve

Keith F. West

Public Affairs

843-556-4905

[keithfwest@comcast.net](mailto:keithfwest@comcast.net)

## The Home Depot Foundation names City Winner of the Award of Excellence for Sustainable Community Development

*North Charleston joins Minneapolis as winner of first-ever Award of Excellence for Sustainable Community Development; Sustainability Institute of SC receives \$75,000 grant; City Comprehensive Plan, commitment to sustainability, and Oak Terrace Preserve green neighborhood cited among key factors in committee decision*

**North Charleston, SC** – In a news conference held today at City Hall, *The Home Depot® Foundation of Atlanta, GA announced that the City of North Charleston and its non-profit partner, The Sustainability Institute of South Carolina, have been named as winners of its 2009 Award of Excellence for Sustainable Community Development.* North Charleston joins Minneapolis, MN, as one of only two winners nationally for this prestigious, first-ever honor. At the presentation, The Sustainability Institute of South Carolina was presented with a check for \$75,000, as part of a grant to foster public education for sustainability in the Lowcountry.

“Clearly, North Charleston is moving to the forefront of sustainable communities in the US,” says **Mayor R. Keith Summey**. “Recent economic development announcements and national honors point to the city as planting the seeds for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. Without question, The Home Depot Foundation award is a reliable indication that North Charleston is improving the quality of life for its citizens.”

The Award of Excellence comes on the heels of two major economic development announcements in North Charleston this fall, with the decision by Boeing Aircraft to build a massive assembly plant for its new Dreamliner passenger planes, and the US Department of Energy’s decision to award the Clemson University Restoration Institute with its federal wind turbine research center. Both announcements will have a profound impact on the local and state economy, and are projected to generate thousands of high-paying jobs.

This award follows a number of recent media honors, including *Green Builder Magazine* recognizing the City’s Oak Terrace Preserve green residential neighborhood, and a listing as one of the nation’s ‘coolest neighborhoods’ by *Men’s Journal*. Closer to home, the Reader’s Pick in the *Charleston City Paper* for “2009 Best New Development” was for the City’s Oak Terrace Preserve green residential project.

The Foundation’s award to the City of North Charleston was part of a stringent selection process, drawn from projects submitted by cities throughout the US. According to a statement released by the Foundation, the award recipients were selected based on a number of criteria, including comprehensive sustainability, environmental sustainability, and green infrastructure, as well as how well they met the needs of the local community while maintaining affordability for its residents.

“The City of North Charleston and the Sustainability Institute of South Carolina deserve enormous credit for the work they are doing to promote sustainability, and we are glad to support their efforts,” said **Kelly Caffarelli**, president of The Home Depot Foundation. “We are delighted to support the City and Institute in their long term commitments to sustainable community development where families can thrive.”

A team of national experts served on the advisory committee, including representatives from 360GREEN, Inc., Global Green USA, Southface Energy Institute, US Green Building Council, and the National League of Cities, among others.

According to the Foundation's statement, the award was based on the City's dedication to building a sustainable community in the aftermath of the closure of the Charleston Naval Base. The City-owned Oak Terrace Preserve green neighborhood is "a role model for successful completion of a sustainable community. Today, it exemplifies best practices in housing, natural resources and land use, and development."

This past August, the Foundation flew in staff members and a team of sustainability experts to carefully review the City's progress in implementing its Comprehensive Plan, and the recommendations of the North Charleston Noisette Community Master Plan. An Atlanta-based video and photography crew conducted interviews, which were compressed into a four-minute documentary short feature by Ranchomo Media, Inc.

Along with the Foundation's full case studies for North Charleston, the video will be posted online at <http://www.homedepotfoundation.org>, as well as the City's YouTube.com channel, <http://www.youtube.com/northcharlestonsc>. A copy of the national news release is also posted online by the Foundation.

The Award of Excellence was first announced at a December 9 luncheon for the NeighborWorks® Symposium in Washington, DC. **Bryan Cordell**, executive director of the Sustainability Institute, attended the luncheon ceremony, along with Mayor Summey, in the nation's capital. Today, Fred Wacker, Catherine Woodling and Andrea Pinabell of the Foundation attended the news conference at City Hall.

In early November, The Home Depot Foundation and Sustainability Institute collaborated with the City, Noisette Foundation, and KaBOOM!, to build a playground in North Charleston, with green, innovative equipment.

"At this point, there are a lot of people that deserve credit for playing a pivotal role in the greening of North Charleston," concludes Summey. "The Award of Excellence is a community honor, which is a result of efforts by City Council and staff, the project team for Oak Terrace Preserve, and Sustainability Institute, in their ongoing efforts at growing a sustainable culture in the City."

Find more information online for the City of North Charleston (<http://www.northcharleston.org>), the Sustainability Institute (<http://www.sustainabilityinstitutesc.org>), and Oak Terrace Preserve (<http://www.oakterracepreservesc.com>).

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## **About The Home Depot Foundation**

The Home Depot Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization that was established in 2002 to further the community building goals of The Home Depot by providing additional resources to assist non-profit organizations.

The Foundation is dedicated to building affordable homes for working families that are healthy to live in and affordable to own. To make homes healthy and affordable, the Foundation encourages developers to incorporate responsible design and use durable and quality materials to ensure that homes are more energy and water efficient, have good indoor air quality, and provide a safe and healthy space to live. Since its formation, The Home Depot Foundation has granted \$120 million to nonprofit organizations and supported the development of more than 65,000 affordable, healthy homes.

While focused on building affordable homes, The Home Depot Foundation is also committed to improving the overall health of our communities. Taking a long-term, comprehensive approach to building healthy, stable communities where families can thrive, the Foundation invests in the planning and restoration of trees along streets, in parks and in schoolyards, the building and refurbishment of community play spaces; and the revitalization of school facilities.

For more information, please contact **Paula Drake**, The Home Depot, 770-384-3439, [paula\\_drake@homedepot.com](mailto:paula_drake@homedepot.com), and **Catherine Woodling**, The Home Depot Foundation, 770-384-2304, [Catherine\\_Woodling@homedepot.com](mailto:Catherine_Woodling@homedepot.com).